

**REMARKS OF REPRESENTATIVE EDWARD MARKEY (D-MASS.)**  
**THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR MEDIA REFORM**  
**BOSTON, MA**  
**APRIL 9, 2011**

Thank you, Commissioner Michael Copps, for that very generous introduction. Michael Copps and I have a mutual admiration society. He is a colossus in the communications universe.

He's a stalwart champion for the public interest.

Commissioner Copps upholds the values that the Communications Act directs the FCC to fulfill on behalf of the American people: Diversity, Localism, Universal Service, Competition, and Innovation.

He is a one-man, policy powerhouse for public media.

When his term at the FCC concludes at the end of this year, there will still be a "Copps" on the beat in the media marketplace.

Michael Copps will leave an enduring legacy of unmatched achievement touching every corner of telecommunications policy, benefitting consumers, competition, choice and our entire country. Let's hear it for Commissioner Michael Copps.

Thank you, Josh Silver, for your incredible leadership and far-reaching vision.

Congratulations and thank you, Craig Aaron, for your new role leading FreePress. I know you'll continue to be a phenomenal force for building the movement for better media.

It's so great to be a part of this amazing event. There are more media mavens per square inch here tonight than anywhere else in America.

You can actually follow around the conference the same people you normally follow on Twitter. They're all right here - it's incredible.

We have the greatest assemblage of writers, artists, community organizers, online activists, independent journalists, and media makers ever assembled – all of you here this evening. You tweet, text, post, Skype, blog, and Facebook to make your voices heard every day.

And since they stopped that 75-year-old lady from digging in Tiblisi last week, your messages will get through - even if you're in Armenia, Azerbaijan or Georgia. The Internet is back up!

Now, more than ever, it's so vital that your messages do get through to the policymakers on Capitol Hill. And why do Republicans in Congress need to hear from you these days?

Well, on Wednesday, they brought to the House Floor a bill to repeal the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to regulate greenhouse gases. Then yesterday, they passed a resolution to repeal the FCC's ability to ensure the openness of the Internet.

So as time ticked down Friday afternoon, Republicans in Congress were trying to shut down the Internet and the federal government – simultaneously.

They didn't shut down the government, and we're all going to make sure they don't shut down the Internet either!

We're going to need to organize, mobilize and get energized to fend off all these assaults.

That's because GOP used to stand for Grand Old Party. But now it stands for Gang of Polluters. Now it stands for Greed Over Principle. Now it stands for Gas and Oil Party.

Republican attacks against the authority of both the EPA and the FCC are designed to make both the polluters and the broadband barons the big winners at the expense of our environment, our health, our economy and American consumers.

In other words, House Republicans are passing legislation to destroy the world wide web. And they're also pushing through a bill to help destroy the whole wide world.

They're taking aim at Google Earth - and setting their sights on Mother Earth.

They trying to mess with the blogosphere - and pollute the atmosphere.

They want to clog up the Internet and smog up the air from smokestacks belching massive amounts of dangerous global warming pollution.

Preserving the open Internet and protecting our environment and human health should be our priority. Instead, these two evil legislative twins would pull us in the opposite direction.

But remember: Congress is a stimulus-response institution. There's nothing more stimulating for a Member of Congress than a deluge of digital feedback from the Netroots.

You have the power to put congressmen on notice that their votes can have consequences for their job security.

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise – Congress cares when you click.

In the net neutrality battle, when the FCC put forward its Open Internet Order, I wasn't happy. I wanted it to go farther. I wanted reclassification under Title II.

But regardless of how we viewed the FCC's Order, we all can agree the Internet needs to be an open, level playing field for everyone that can't be controlled by a central authority, whether it's a corporation or a country's totalitarian regime.

We're constantly reminded how essential an open Internet ecosystem is to free expression and democracy.

In the Middle East, from Tunisia to Iran, Egypt to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Libya, young people are striving to throw off the shackles of corrupt, repressive regimes.

The echoes of Tahrir Square and Pearl Square in Bahrain stretch back through world history to places like Lexington Green, only a few miles from here, in my Congressional District. On Lexington Green in 1775, American colonists took up arms and began the struggle to free themselves from the tyranny of Great Britain.

There was a Tea Party then too – but it was the Tea Party of Sam Adams. Today's Tea Partiers are the “Alice in Wonderland” variety – and there are lots of Mad Hatters.

The Internet is the modern day musket in the uprisings surging through the Middle East. These modern day patriots are using digital tools to reach for the freedom that is a fundamental right of all human beings.

Social media is an enabler, but these are not “Facebook revolutions”.

The movements sweeping across the Middle East – and the Midwest of our own country - are about people - and by people - using the latest tools and leveraging the power of the network.

The ubiquity of mobile phones, which are really PC's in the pockets of the protestors - are the means for transmitting the scenes that grab the world's attention.

None of the wizardry of wireless devices, applications and services would have happened without the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Before the Telecom Act was signed into law, not one family in America had broadband Internet access at home. The Telecom Act unleashed hundreds of billions of dollars in private sector investment and changed the world.

We all worked extremely hard to enact the Telecom Act, which has kept our country at the forefront of innovation.

Today, we need to remain vigilant to ensure we don't permit the return of the type of consolidation that would undercut our leading position in the world.

AT&T and T-Mobile recently announced their plan to merge. A merger would reduce the number of major national wireless firms from 4 to 3.

In the early 1990s, American ingenuity and innovation were held back by a sluggish, analog cellular duopoly. In every market across the nation, we had two cellular providers. They were analog and charged 50 cents a minute.

Working for several years, Congress ultimately enacted legislation I shepherded successfully through the legislative process to move over 200 megahertz of spectrum from the government to the FCC to reallocate to the private sector. It was a big battle. But it was worth it.

We used that new spectrum to auction off new licenses for mobile services. And, importantly, we succeeded in preventing the cellular duopoly from gobbling up those new frequencies. Instead, we created the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6<sup>th</sup> competitors in the marketplace.

These new competitors challenged the duopoly. The new companies entered the market with digital technology, forcing the incumbents to finally innovate and invest.

And what happened? Prices went down, and investment went up.

Wireless became a technology for the masses, not just for yuppies on Wall Street who could afford to pay 50 cents a minute.

We moved quickly from black rotary dial phones to the Blackberry.

That competition was hard to create because the existing monopoly or duopoly fought competition hard. Their arguments were then and remain the same today. Don't regulate. We have plenty of competition.

Thankfully we had the conviction to ignore them. And the American people benefitted immensely.

Today, the question is quite simple. Do we want to turn back the clock 20 years and return to a duopoly?

AT&T and Verizon have pretty much divided the nation into Bell East and Bell West. Letting them have a national wireless duopoly is what is at stake here.

The bottom line for me is that I already know what a wireless duopoly looks like because I successfully broke it up almost 20 years ago.

This deal threatens to turn back time. It's a telecommunications way back machine.

And in the passenger seat of that same way back machine is the Republican assault on public broadcasting, on NPR.

When I spoke four years ago at NCMR in Memphis, Republicans on Capitol Hill were in an absolute frenzy about a grievous threat to the Republic.

The object of their fear and loathing: Clifford the Big Red Dog!

You'd have thought that one furry, four-legged K-9 was the cause of all that was wrong with our media.

Now fast forward to this Spring. The Tea Party has tagged NPR and CPB with the same tired charges. Mark Twain used to say that "History doesn't repeat itself, but it does tend to rhyme."

Four years ago in Memphis, I said that if the Republicans would be back in 4 years for another hit on NPR.

With the help of WGBH and WBUR here in Boston and all of you, we will once again beat back Republican efforts to kill CPB and NPR.

And just as we're pushing the Republican party to keep its hands off Arthur and his friends, we're going to make sure that no one touches public access television and low-power radio.

In this area, we have a high-powered message: Keep...Your Hands...Off.

We're also going to make sure that the children's TV rules stay on the books and stay strong, so our children receive the highest quality programming.

We're going to make sure that everyone – including Americans who are blind, deaf or deaf and blind – can access the latest media and technologies and be full participants in today's society.

And again, I thank Commissioner Copps for being such a great champion in this effort with me.

Last October, President Obama signed into law legislation that I authored - the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act - in the East Room of the White House.

Two decades ago, when the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law, Americans with disabilities couldn't get around if buildings weren't wheelchair accessible; today it's about being Web accessible.

Twenty years ago, the ADA mandated physical ramps into buildings. Today, individuals with disabilities need online ramps to the Internet so they can get to the Web from wherever they happen to be.

From the time of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan - through the Americans with Disabilities Act - to closed captioning for television programming and ability of the deaf to make telephone calls – and now to the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, we've made important progress.

And as our population ages, we will inevitably have more citizens who may be hard of hearing. We need everyone to be involved in the effort to improve public media, and this new law will give Americans with disabilities with the telecom tools to join in this fight for better public media.

Our challenge is to shape the media for the public, not the publicly-traded company. To build a mass movement for better media to inform and enlighten, now and into the future.

It will be a great challenge.

In Washington, there are legions of lobbyists for every congressman. There are Communications Colossi who want to warp the World Wide Web into their image.

Only you stand between the Web as we know it, and the Web as they want it to be.

The other side is pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into the battle, especially now that they've been given a free hand by a majority of the Supreme Court.

Well, they may have Citizen's United, but we have Netizens United!

Bloggers of America unite! You have nothing to lose but your net neutrality.

The voices of the American people must be heard. We have to make sure that testifying next to the CEOs at the congressional hearings are the people you choose to testify.

On every single issue, you must select the witnesses to be heard at these hearings before the same committee.

Why is our fight worth it?

In the words of Robert F. Kennedy, whose speech almost a half-century ago electrified a nation:

*“Too much and for too long, we seemed to have surrendered personal excellence and community values in the mere accumulation of material things.*

*“Our Gross National Product, now, is over \$800 billion dollars a year, but that Gross counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage.*

*“It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for the people who break them. It counts the destruction of the redwood and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl.*

*“It counts...the television programs which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children.*

*“Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play.*

*“It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.*

*“And it can tell us everything about America except why we are proud that we are Americans.”*

A broadcast license, a website can animate and teach.

Communications can enable and ennoble or degrade and debase.

This conference is so important.

It's sparking a wave of grassroots activism across the world.

A wave of digital democracy.

A wave of energy sweeping across cyberspace.

You are the energy behind this wave.

I thank you, bloggers for sending the message loud and clear: Hands off the Internet!

And we're going to tell them:

Hands off Medicare!

Hands off Medicaid!

Hands off Planned Parenthood!

Hands off Social Security!

Hands off the EPA

Hands off the wind and solar resolution!

Hands off the Internet!

This is the time, this is the place, you are the people.

I am your partner.

Thanks you so, so much for all that you do.